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itself in the case of the foreign names *Hamattu* and *Amattu* "Hamâth," *Ha-mîdi* and *Amîdi* "Amid," so it is also probable that this Assyrian and Aramaic *דקל* (ח) is only hardened in pronunciation from an original *דקל* (ה)—and that the pronunciation with *ק* goes back to a still earlier form with *ג*. Probably the matter stands thus, that *Idiglat*, especially *Diglat* (the latter in the Behistun inscription) was the weaker *Babylonian* pronunciation, as reflected in the Persian *Tigrâ*, and as retained to the present day in the Arabic *دجلة*, while, in the Hebrew and (cf. *מִכְלָה*) Aramaic, the specifically *Assyrian* pronunciation received precedence. In other cases it is also known that, in Assyrian, a hard, emphatic *ק* corresponds to a weak *ג* in the Babylonian, and that, in still other respects, differences exist between the Assyrian and Babylonian pronunciations, is no less well known. Worthy of notice is the rejection of the fem. ending (a,t) in the Hebrew and Aramaic; while the Assyrian and the other languages mentioned above, including the Neo-Persian, have constantly retained it. Cf. the reverse in the Assyrian-Himjaritic-Aramaic *עֶרְתַּר*, *עֶתְרַי*, *עֶשְׂתַּר*, in contrast with the Hebrew-Canaanitic *עֶשְׂתֶּרֶת*.—*Schrader's KAT.*<sup>2</sup>

R. F.

### ✧ EDITORIAL ✧ NOTES. ✧

**The Study of Assyrian.**—The impression prevails that, unless one has a life-time to devote to it, little can be accomplished in the study of Assyrian. This impression is a mistaken one. It is true, of course, that one's entire life might profitably be devoted to the study; that, to become recognized as an authority in Assyrian, one must give himself up exclusively to this and kindred subjects. But are we to take it for granted that, unless a man is to become a *specialist* in a given department, there is nothing in connection with that department which he may profitably study? Shall no man study Latin except the prospective professor of Latin?

It is probable that the difficulties of Assyrian study have been exaggerated. Or, perhaps the statement may better be made thus: The difficulties which originally existed,—and, it must be conceded, they seemed almost insuperable,—thanks to the arduous labors of such men as Delitzsch, Schrader, Oppert, Sayce, are now largely removed. Difficulties, to be sure, still remain; but, compared with those which have been overcome, they are of a minor character. The greatest difficulty for the student is the mastery of the syllabary, now that it has been quite definitely determined. But we think that an important and helpful step in advance was made during the past summer, when it was decided by an eminent Assyriologist—a practical instructor—that it was expedient, first to get some knowledge of the language through transliterated texts, and then, gradually to master the signs. This method has two advantages: it will encourage the student; and it will enable him to acquire the syllabary all the more rapidly and thoroughly, because he will know the meaning and signification of the roots and formative elements for which the signs stand.

The adoption of this method will induce five men to take up Assyrian where, otherwise, one would have hesitated. Nor need we fear that men will not learn the syllabary, after having gained some knowledge of the language. Surely that

which he would earlier have been compelled to do, will now be done all the more willingly; for not only will the student find it more easy, but he will be more fully persuaded of its importance.

The question arises: For whom is a study of Assyrian important? Whom will it pay? We answer:

1) *The professors of Hebrew.* We cannot understand how any one whose business it is to instruct in Hebrew, or to teach the Old Testament, can well afford to be without some knowledge, at least, of that language and literature which has already affected so largely the very questions which he is called upon daily to discuss in the class-room, viz., the forms of Hebrew words, the meaning of Hebrew words, the history of a nation so closely connected with that of Israel. The example of a learned professor of Hebrew, nearly sixty years of age, in a Southern seminary, who has spent his vacation, just closing, in the class-room study of Assyrian, because, indeed, he felt that a knowledge of this language was necessary to fit him for the better performance of his duties as a professor of Hebrew,—the example of this man deserves to be imitated by younger men. There is much time spent in these days by our theological professors in the discussion of questions which are of no possible moment, however they may be settled. Why not devote a portion of this time to the study of Assyrian? We profess to follow the historico-grammatical method in our interpretation of Scripture. Are there any questions then so fundamental as questions of grammar, of lexicography, of history? Is there any one source from which so much aid may be gained as from Assyrian?

2) *Ministers who know Hebrew.* There are some clergymen, let us thank God, who are familiar with Hebrew, who read the Hebrew of the Old Testament, as they read the Greek of the New. These, as compared in number with those who do not possess this knowledge, are, it must be confessed, few. But they are growing more numerous. Ten years ago they might be counted by tens. To-day they may be counted perhaps by hundreds. For this class of men, we can think of no more profitable linguistic study. Even a slight knowledge of Assyrian will enliven their Hebrew, and make it again as fresh as when first learned. Besides, who ought to be more fully equipped for the study of the Divine Word than the minister? Not even the specialist. If the Assyrian language and history will assist one in understanding the Hebrew language and history, shall it not be studied?

3) *Students of Ancient History and of Comparative Religions.* The discoveries in Assyria have opened a new field in Ancient History. What student in this department or in that of Comparative Religions,—now a science in itself,—can well afford to be ignorant of a language, of a literature, and of a history which promise so much to the investigator. Nor need one suppose that he can understand the history or religion of a people, any more than its literature, without an acquaintance with its language. The greatest of all Hebrew historians, Ewald, was likewise the greatest of all Hebrew scholars.

It is objected, *first*, that the books for the study of Assyrian are very expensive. This is true; but what library is worthy of the name that has not an Assyrian apparatus? and, besides, what are a few dollars in a matter of this kind. It may not be long, perhaps, until we shall have Assyrian text-books prepared by American professors, and then the objection of expense will no longer exist.

It is objected, *secondly*, that it is impossible to obtain instruction. This was

true three years ago, but is no longer true. At Cambridge, Professor D. G. Lyon has classes in Assyrian; in New York City, Professor Francis R. Brown; in Philadelphia, Professor John P. Peters; in Baltimore, Professor Paul Haupt. There was, during the past summer, and there will also be, the coming summer, an opportunity for gaining this instruction. Shall all this kind of work be done in Germany? Shall not American scholars show that they have a deep interest in whatever concerns the Word of God, or the language in which that Word is written?

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**Unaccented Open Syllables with a Short Vowel.**—With Professor Strack's admirable treatment of "Syllables in Hebrew" the discussion in *HEBRAICA* of the so-called "Intermediate" Syllable will close. We regret that we cannot take space for the publication of other articles on this subject which have been received.

In closing the discussion, a few words may be regarded as in place:—

From the lack of a clear treatment of this subject by grammarians, and from the opinions of eminent teachers expressed orally and by letter to the writer, it is inferred that the subject is one not deemed worthy of attention. But what are the facts?

1) The Hebrew vowel-system, "while not authentic, and by no means to be regarded as an intrinsic part of the text," is not merely valuable, but indeed *necessary*, as an aid in learning the language. No accurate knowledge of the Hebrew can be obtained aside from an absolute mastery of the principles of the Massoretic system of punctuation, whether these be regarded as natural or artificial, real or imaginary. And the regularity of the system is all the more a reason why seeming departures from it should be closely examined.

2) There are in the first chapter of Genesis 454 syllables ending with a vowel, including those ending with a quiescent letter. Of these, 181 are accented, 273 unaccented (the *Méthègh* not being regarded as an accent). In all grammars the law is laid down that unaccented simple (or open) syllables must have a long vowel; but of the 273 unaccented syllables, 39, i. e., one in seven, has a short vowel. There is, of course, a clear reason in every case for this seeming violation of the rule. But why, when so large a number of such cases occurs, should no mention be made of them?

3) That student who fails to notice this deviation, and to classify the instances of it, cannot be called a critical student. That teacher who will not take into account a fact which, in violation of a most fundamental principle, occurs at least twenty times on every page of the Hebrew Bible, is not a critical teacher.

4) In our study of the Hebrew upon the basis of the Massoretic punctuation, we find, as a matter of fact, repeated instances of unaccented syllables ending in a short vowel. Why not, for the sake of convenience, designate these syllables by some definite and appropriate term? Professor Green has used the expression "intermediate;" Gesenius (Kautzsch) "half-open;" Strack suggests for some "loosely closed," for others, "opened." For our own part, any one of these terms would be satisfactory.

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[In the article on "The Aramaic Language," § 1, the spelling "Shemitic" was allowed to stand, by an oversight, instead of "Semitic." Hereafter ך will be transliterated by w, and ם by š.—*Ed.*]